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HOW WILL 4-H MEET THE WARTIME CHALLENGE OF 1944?\*

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In discussing the 1944 4-H war program, I have a deep sense of appreciation for the patriotic response of you State club leaders to the appeals made last year, when you mobilized the largest number of rural young people ever to be enrolled in 4-H Club work. In many States the 4-H results, according to reports received in the Federal office, were amazing, often owing to the ingenious plans made and techniques devised to reach large numbers with a limited personnel. May the satisfactions and knowledges that come from these experiences guide you in the still greater tasks ahead in 1944.

As you doubtless realize, 1944 will set an all-time peak for food production in the United States. It will witness the most gigantic planting program in the Nation's history: 380 million acres - 16 million more than were planted in 1943. This is a big order. But the American people, ever since the war started, have met all their goals. This patriotic response assures us that the farm people of this country will meet this tremendous 1944 food production goal if every segment of rural America does its full part. As far as the rural young people to be reached through 4-H Club work are concerned, we must as our first step show them, and their parents too, the reasons behind the goals set. To do this is good sense. It is in keeping with recognized educational principles.

Now let us look at the food situation and our food needs. In his message to Congress, the President said -

"Our food plans for the future are, of course, predicated on the assumption that we must not only continue our shipments overseas but actually increase them. The war is by no means won, and the global effort must be continued and accelerated. The requirements for our armed forces will be increased not only because they will have a larger number of men and women than in 1943, but because more of them will be stationed in distant parts of the world.

"In the last war we fed 4 million people in uniform - largely concentrated in the United States and France. In this war, by the end of 1943, we will have almost 11 million men in uniform and they will be stationed all over the world.

"As our Army grows, as more men are sent overseas, larger food reserves will have to be accumulated and civilian belts will have to be tightened. Furthermore, our armed forces require more of the so-called 'protective' foods such as meats, fats and oils, milk and canned goods - foods which are, therefore, bound to run short for the increased civilian demands.

"The armed forces of our allies will also increase in 1944, and they will have to receive food assistance from us.

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\* Talk given before the National 4-H Club Congress, held in Chicago, Ill., November 29 to December 2, 1943.



"The amount of food going to Lend-Lease is gradually increasing. In 1941 it was 2 percent of our food production; in 1942 approximately 6 percent. This year because of increasing Russian shortages and other needs, it will probably reach 10 percent.

"I am sure that the American people realize that every pound of food which we send to our fighting allies is helping our own soldiers in their battles and in speeding the day when all our fighting men and women will come home.

"A certain small percentage of food will have to be used as the United Nations liberate presently occupied countries, until such time as the populations of these countries can have a chance to become self-supporting."

After our young people have been made fully conscious of the situation and the needs here so briefly outlined, what then shall be the main, important techniques for helping them to carry out a comprehensive 4-H food production and conservation program? As to the 4-H garden program, club members not only had more gardens of their own in 1943, but they assumed more responsibility for family gardens. The President asked recently that the production of our home gardens be doubled. Undoubtedly much more can be produced by 4-H members next year if they will plan, plant, and take care of their gardens so that they will produce all summer and late into the fall. In our gardens we can and should grow far more summer and fall greens as well as root crops to store for winter use. We cannot emphasize too much in our work with local leaders, the early and thorough preparation of garden soil, control of insects and diseases when they first appear, use of disease-resistant plant varieties, proper watering, and elimination of weeds when they are small. In many instances too, our club members with their background of 1943 experience can safely enlarge their gardens considerably. Our experienced 4-H Club members are also in a fine position to help the inexperienced ones in their own neighborhoods, to give talks and demonstrations at various community meetings, and to spread, often by special devices evolved out of their own thinking, that enthusiasm and earnestness so necessary to the success of any garden program.

I have spent some time discussing the garden program -- first, because a considerable number of the entire 4-H Club membership is engaged in gardening; secondly, because of the program's paramount importance in furnishing protective foods; and thirdly, because the techniques for increasing the garden output apply also in some way to nearly every phase of crop and livestock production.

In all this work of increasing the food production of our Nation, let us keep our 4-H members informed in as interesting and challenging a way as possible. For example, let us improve every opportunity to remind them of the Napoleonic axiom, "An army marches on its stomach" -- as true today as it was 140 years ago. Attention might well be called to the great progress made in supplying adequate food under situations never even imagined then. 4-H members might be informed that the Quartermaster Corps of the Army is doing this seemingly impossible task of supplying over 50 far-flung battle-fronts--in the Arctic, in steaming tropical jungles, in Italy, Africa, and New Guinea. We have the longest line of communications ever attempted, and for the largest Army in the history of our Nation. This necessitates approxi-



mately 24 million meals daily which are so planned as to give maximum satisfaction of taste, as well as nutritional qualities that produce energy and protect each soldier from falling prey to the ravages of deficiency diseases. All this has been made possible by the long-range vision of those who have made food available to the armed forces.

We, too, as leaders will need long-range vision in mapping out the big job ahead in terms of food to be produced and conserved by the rural young people of this Nation through 4-H Club work, and in developing still more supervisory and method techniques for reaching still larger numbers effectively with our limited personnel. A splendid beginning has already been made. The 4-H neighborhood leader has become an effective part of the local 4-H volunteer leadership system in most States where large increases in enrollment have occurred. Surprising strides have been made in the development of a new type of literature. This can be observed in the attractive exhibits on display at the National 4-H Club Congress. Publicity in connection with important 4-H events, such as 4-H Achievement and Mobilization Week, has been capitalized advantageously in many States. A prestige for 4-H Club work has thus been developed, which is probably one of the most important factors in attracting new members, according to studies made. However, just as our pioneer 4-H Club leaders evolved through their own experiences and studies the present recognized 4-H techniques, so shall we today have to evolve still more new techniques to meet present situations in such a way that 4-H Club work may maintain its effectiveness in helping to win the war and in bringing still greater opportunities to rural young people. Necessarily this will involve techniques for helping to an even greater degree county extension agents, particularly agents new on the job. Naturally these new techniques will evolve partly out of experiences already gained such as in supervision of the work under way; training of both community and neighborhood 4-H leaders; use of monthly State and county 4-H news bulletins, circular letters, and the radio; and in the use of various forms of recognition such as those that high-light the importance of work to be done, the efforts of the individual, and the results attained.

In all such endeavors, let us not lose sight of the objectives set up for the strengthening of the entire 4-H war program. True, the production and conservation of food is of paramount importance. But we should so gear our own program to the triumphant march of speeded-up war programs that we will not lose sight of other important phases. 4-H members should be given some part to play in all community war services such as salvage campaigns and war-bond drives. Noteworthy results have been achieved already in a number of States. Relative to this important phase of our work, let us not yield to the pressure to streamline our 4-H programs to the extent that we will overlook the values that come with community service activities. It is essential to the social and spiritual development of anyone that he be a participant in group activities for the good of all rather than for mere individual gain. Were such activities universal in this country, we would not today be reading in the papers about hoodlums causing destruction and bringing disgrace to the communities involved.

Equally important is the encouragement of 4-H Club members to do all they can to improve their own health and that of their community. In my opinion, you club leaders can do much by cooperating with school authorities in encouraging the new school physical-fitness program just now getting



under way. The 4-H and the school programs can supplement and reinforce each other very well. We are told by the Army physical-training experts that young Mr. America is weak from the hips up. Lack of "superstructure" in American youth is a condition now being remedied at various Army training camps. 4-H Clubs can cooperate to advantage with other agencies in urging "toughening up" exercises that will strengthen the muscles of the abdomen, arms, and chest. Let us do all we can to help our 4-H boys and girls who will enter the armed forces to be so fit that they will be prepared to defend themselves successfully in any trying situation. And when they come back to us, they will need our sympathetic understanding and guidance in their efforts for successful readjustment.

In this whole field of rural youth guidance, skill is particularly needed in developing and supervising 4-H programs to enkindle in local leaders initiative and imagination, so that they, in turn, will capitalize on their own rich experiences by giving a larger number of rural young people than ever before, opportunities for growth in their own communities. If local club leaders are enabled to catch the vision of their own possibilities as youth leaders, results far beyond our ability to estimate may often be attained. By such means the 4-H members themselves throughout our country may be enabled to develop into sturdy and significant leaders - so much needed now and in the uncertain years ahead - able to be a real force in helping this Nation to wield increasingly its influence for a just peace and fair dealing.